Day Four (4:1 – 5:20)

To Walk in Love

Warm-up Groups:
- — The aim today is to learn to *recognize* figurative language (images, comparisons, analogies, metaphors, etc.), and to appreciate how they enrich divine communication.
- — We will divide the text for today into three parts (4:1-15; 4:17-32; 5:1-20). For each group, identify and describe how figurative language operates to communicate the message.

The Images
- The Body
- Darkness and light
- Putting off, putting on clothes
- The ship tossed to and fro

A. INTRODUCTION.

- With today's passage, we begin a new section in Paul's letter to the Ephesians. There is a rather sharp line that divides chapter three from chapter four.

- Remember our threefold metaphor of 'sitting, walking, standing'.
  - We are now moving from where we 'sit' in Christ (Eph. 1:20; 2:6), that is, with him, at the Father's right hand, heir to all that he has won for us),
  - to the requirement that we 'walk' in a certain way (named in Eph. 2:10, now exhorted in 4:1; 5:2).

- Sometimes this is described more technically as the move from *Kerygma* to *Didache* (write out the words and describe).

  — The **Kerygma** is the proclamation of what God has done for us in Christ:
    — 1. he has made us alive,
    — 2. reconciled us to the Father,
    — 3. made us sit with him at the Father's right hand,
    — 4. given us the Spirit as the guarantee of our full inheritance to come,
    — 5. and made us his body, his citizenry, in the world.

  — The **Didache** is the 'teaching of a way of life'.
    — It is a way of walking, of conducting ourselves in Christ.
    — Morality, practice…
    — The verbs change here from 'indicative' to 'imperative'.

Indicative: indicates our present reality

- 1:12 we who first hoped in Christ have been destined and **appointed to live for the praise of his glory**.
- 2:10 **For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.**

Imperative: do this therefore

- **lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called**

— **The key is response**
— The Gospel demands a response, and Paul is about to lay out the framework of that response for us.

It's about a new way of life!

B. Walk worthily and Build up the Body (4:1-16).

1 I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, 3e ager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

- Just an aside…
- Paul is imprisoned here…

1 I therefore, a prisoner (one in bonds, desmio - desmios) **for the Lord, beg you to lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, 2 with all lowliness and meekness, with patience, forbearing one another in love, 3 eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond** (sundesmo sundesmos) **of peace.**

- I am in bonds
- I wish you to be in *bonds of peace*
    - Little play on words – perhaps even subconscious

Third Missionary Journey			52-57
Paul in Ephesus			52-55
Paul in Ephesus, Macedonia, Illyricum and Achaia			
	Galatians		48
	Philippians		60-62
	1 Corinthians		55-56
	2 Corinthians		55-56
	Romans		early 57
Fourth and Last Jerusalem Visit			May 57
Ceasarean Imprisonment			57-59
voyage to Rome begins			Sept 57
First Roman Imprisonment			Feb 60-62
	Captivity Letters		
	Colossians		60-62
	Ephesians		60-62
	Philemon		60-62
Fourth Missionary Journey			63-65
	1 Timothy		63-64 (?)
	Titus		63-64 (?)
here would be the possible visit to Spain before re-arrest			
Final Roman imprisonment (execution)			65
	2 Timothy		65

The Letter to the Ephesians

- In vv. 1-3, we are given the basic exhortation that governs all that follows.
- We are called to 'walk worthily', in a way befitting to our call in Christ.
    - Because of all that he has done for us, we are called in consequence to live fully for him.

- And notice what we need for this:
    - we need *lowliness*, *meekness*, *patience*, and *forbearance*—these are all qualities of relational humility.
    - They have to do with how we relate to one another in Christ.
    - And all this is governed by love, and by maintenance of the unity we have been given by the Holy Spirit.

        — Note this: it is the Spirit who gives us true unity in Christ: unity in relationships and unity in ecumenism.
            — We cannot forge this on our own (though we can sin against it and effectively block this unity).
            — As we seek unity again between Christians, we have to recognize that it is the Spirit who gives us this unity.
                — My experience of HTB – spirit filled Christians tend to be more ecumenical

        — '**Peace**' here is a very loaded and significant term. It means more than just the absence of conflict.
            — It is **'shalom'**, it is a full and right relationship to one another in Christ.
            — As we have already said – not so much a tranquil feeling as the sense of warring parties eating around the same table

Have someone read this aloud to emphasise the rhetoric

4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of us all, who is above all and through all and in all.

- There is a key word here!
    - ONE…

- We will not have adequate time to stop and meditate together on vv. 4-6, but they are very rich in content.

- Notice first of all the reference to the Spirit, to the Lord, and to God.

- This is very likely a trinitarian reference to the Spirit, Son and Father.

- To the Spirit is joined the one body and the one hope.
  - It is the Spirit who fills us and makes us one body in Christ, and who imparts to us our hope of the age to come.

- To the Son is joined faith and baptism:
  - it is by placing our faith in Christ as our saviour and Lord, and by being baptized into him, that we attain to communion with God.

- To God the Father is joined the whole work:
  - he is our Father and he reigns over all, and by his Son is through all things, and by the Spirit is in all things.

- Notice the emphasis on 'oneness' (7 times in these verses): God is one, and yet he is also three and works many things in us.

7 But grace was given to each according to the measure of Christ's gift. 8 Therefore it is said 'When he ascended on high he led a host of captives, and he gave gifts to men.'

9 (In saying 'he ascended', what does it mean but that he descended into the lower parts of the earth? 10 He who descended is also he who ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things.)

11 And his gifts were that some should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; 14 so that we may no longer be tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.

- Now Paul moves on to consider the various manifestations of the Spirit in the body (vv. 77ff.).

- We are one, but have many gifts among us.

  - Image of an **orchestra** – unity, not carcophany, but many gifts making up the whole tapestry of sound.

- Paul quotes Ps. 68:18, but in a modified form, in order to show that all gifts come from the risen Christ through the Holy Spirit.

- When he ascended to heaven, he poured out various gifts upon his body:

  - He names apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors & teachers. These are the gifts that cause the church to be founded and to grow to maturity, each playing its own role (note: there are other gifts of the Spirit not mentioned here, e.g. 1 Cor. 12).
  - Note: all seem to be <u>speech</u> gifts
    - All have a lot to do with founding of Christian communities
    - Pastor and teacher is often termed one, to give you the fourfold ministry

— The gifts are not *ours*, as something we possess. They are given for the body.
  — Indeed the definition of a gift is something that is given, not something that you receive
  — Otherwise they would be called GETS or something!

- But the key thing to note is the *reason* for these gifts:
  - **so that the body itself might build itself up and come to maturity.**
  - Christ does not just equip the body directly by himself; he uses us, his members, to build up his body.

— There is a positive purpose in this: that we might all have unity in faith and in the knowledge of God (notice the importance here on the unity in what we believe); and secondly that we might come to maturity in Christ.

— We are not called to remain infantile or childish; we are called to full maturity as a body, so that we can act as Christ's body in the world.

— Mature manhood: uses this in order to bring across the idea of sonship – particularly for their time the idea of maturity was much better expressed through the son because the son inherited. The son in fact became a son once he took on the father's business.

— The other reason for the male term would be the fact that he is talking of Christ himself – as Christ was a mature *man*

There is a lesson here: has to do with maturing into Christ
To be fully mature is to be less focused on yourself
To be immature is to claim your own life

— But there is also a defensive reason for these gifts: to keep us from being storm-tossed by the winds of false teaching and the work of the evil one. There is a real battle for the truth and for our unity, and we need to use the gifts the Lord has given to defend the church against our enemies.

15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every joint with which it is supplied, when each part is working properly, makes bodily growth and upbuilds itself in love.

- The conclusion (vv. 15-16) employs a powerful metaphor of the body that grows fully up into Christ.
  - Do you see the importance of this?
  - **Christ** is the source of this growth, through his Holy Spirit in us.
  - But this does not happen at once or automatically. **It is living.** Just as human beings grow up over time, so does the church.

- It is like a body which needs to grow and mature. We have a role. And we the members are used to build up the body through the gifts given to us by the Spirit.

C. THE TWO WAYS CONTRASTED (4:17-32).

17 Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; 18 they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; 19 they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness.

- Now Paul presents us with the contrast between two ways of life, to make clear how we are supposed to live.
  - We are not to *walk* like the Gentiles do. Stop for a moment here.
  - We have to recognize that for the Jews, the Gentile nations lived in a fundamentally godless and immoral way.
  - It is just this that we are called to 'put off'.

in the futility of their minds;

18 they are darkened in their understanding,

alienated from the life of God because of

the ignorance that is in them, due to their

hardness of heart;

19 they have become callous

and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness.

Licentiousness - flagrant and free form of sexual wrongdoing

Greed towards uncleanness
- uncleanness: NT word for various sexual wrongdoing
  - Jews were relatively speaking more moral in this area
  - Sexual sin in this sense was particularly a mark of the Gentiles

20 You did not so learn Christ! – 21 assuming you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus.

- Did you see the unusual expression in v. 20?

- **We are called to 'learn' Christ.**

- The verb here is the one related to the noun, ‘disciple’: it means to learn a way of life as a disciple.
    - And the grammar here is just as unusual in the Greek as it is in modern languages. Paul is using striking grammar to communicate that our new way of life *is* Christ, and that to be a Christian is to learn Christ’s way of life.
    - To live rightly is to learn Christ, and until we have learned to live his way, we have not truly learned Christ. There is cause for some meditation on this point.
    - Image of disciples walking in Jesus’ footsteps

    - *Jarring you with unusual grammar: e.g. “Live Belfast” – you can’t live Belfast, it’s a rhetorical technique that jars the listener but still communicates the meaning.*

Darkness and light

Old clothes new clothes

17 Now this I affirm and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds; 18 they are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; 19 they have become callous and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness. 20 You did not so learn Christ! – 21 assuming you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus.

22 Put off you old nature which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and put on the new nature, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.

- Note the metaphors used here (vv. 17-24):
    - First is that of darkness—this will be more fully developed in the next section.
        - Then we have the idea of 'clothing'—we are called to put off, like taking off clothes, a former and corrupt way of life, and put on a new way of life.
    - This is not only external clothing, however. We have been given a new *nature* in Christ, with a renewed mind, a kind of new creation in his likeness that allows us to live in true righteousness.
        - Put off the old, put on the new…

Baptism

- Do you see how Paul turns this metaphor of clothing into something which is deeply internal to us, a new nature that has been created in us.

    - Paul is speaking here, in fact, about our baptism. Those baptized actually put off their old clothing (literally) and went down into the water, and were then clothed in new white robes.
    - This was to signify an internal change of a new graced nature, a new transformed mind and heart that allows us to live as Christ does.

An Important Word Of Hope

— When we apply this to our lives, we all find a 'gap' between what is ours in baptism, and how we are actually living this out.

— This gap can be a source of great struggle for us, a cause of self-condemnation or self-justification.

— We need to recognize this 'gap' and come to the Lord in repentance, calling on his help to allow us to fulfill our full baptismal reality.

— And even if we are in some sense removed from God, he is never removed from us-— **his grace is always available**.

25 Therefore, putting away falsehood, let every one speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members of one another. 26 Be angry but do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil. 28 Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need. 29 Let no evil talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for edifying, as fits the occasion, that it may impart grace to those who hear. 30 And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, in whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamour and slander be put away from you, withall malice, 32 and be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.

- The section closes with a litany—a kind of extended list—of the qualities that should be ours in Christ (vv. 25-32):

- the focus throughout is on guarding against anger and malice, and instead being kind and tenderhearted towards one another in Christ.

D. WALK CAREFULLY (5:1-20).

1 Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. 2 And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

- This final section is really a continuation and capstone of what has come before. In vv. 1-2 especially, we have a summary of the whole point:

- What is our fundamental call?

- To *be* true sons and daughters of God as those who imitate him. And how do we imitate him?
    - We walk behind him
    - By *walking* in love as Christ loved us and gave himself for us.

— This is a marvelous passage, worthy of meditation and memorization.
— We are to be like Christ, and our life is to be a pleasing sacrifice to the Father as was his

3 But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving.

5 Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. 6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience.

- Paul returns immediately to practical living in vv. 3-14, focusing here especially on the need to avoid sexual immorality.

    - Paul links fornication and impurity with covetousness (which he sees linked to idolatry) as the sum of the darkened way of life here.

    - Idolatry wedded to sexual immorality nicely sums up the depraved human way of life apart from God.

    - Basically: Money & Sex

    - And it is just these things that we as Christian are called to avoid.

    — It should not be difficult for us to recognize sexual immorality and impurity in our culture. It surrounds us and penetrates everywhere.
        — And how we need to the Spirit of Christ and a new way of life in order to avoid falling into this immorality.
    — We should also be able to see how covetousness reigns in our various cultures:
        — we are consumed by a love of material things, and a lust for more and more wealth.
        — These become for modern man a kind of idol, a love for this world that keeps us from loving God fully.

7 Therefore do not associate with them, 8 for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), 10 and try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. 11 Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. 12 For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; 13 but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light.

- Paul employs again here the metaphor of light and darkness to capture the opposite ways of life.

- We are called to come out of the darkness and have no dealings with it

- (Do we not often hold onto certain things in the dark, and refuse to bring them to the light of Christ?).

- We are also warned that those who indulge in these things have no share in the kingdom of God.

- This is strong language, and we should take heed.

14 Therefore it is said, 'Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light'.

- Who knows who said it – perhaps it was an early church baptismal hymn
    - Would certainly fit with the idea of baptism, it's scriptural, Arise Shine Out…
    - Remember Paul lived there 3 years – he probably knew their songs…!

- Just as we were brought out of darkness through our conversion and baptism, we are called to actually live this way: to arise from 'sleep'
    - (a metaphor for a kind of darkness and death)
    - and to arise to a new way of life in Christ.

15 Look carefully, then, how you walk, not as unwise men, but as wise, 16 making the most of the time, because the days are evil.

- Paul closes with a wonderful exhortation, returning to the theme of 'walking'.
    - — We need to know the days we are in (they are days of 'evil', that is, times in which many are following the ways of darkness).
    - — We need to be wise, not foolish—language used by Jesus himself to describe how his followers should live—and we need to understand the Lord's will for how we should live.
    - — We are called to avoid intoxication with wine, and instead be filled (that is, intoxicated) with the Spirit. This is again a strong comparison, showing how we are to be fully immersed in the life of the Spirit.

17 Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. 18 And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit,

19 addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart,

20 always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

-> Worship, our final destination

- And the passage ends by bringing us full circle back to our starting point on worship:
    - the life of the Spirit leads naturally into worship, the offering of hymns, songs and prayers to the Lord, full of thanksgiving to God the Father for all that he has given us.
- This is a fitting conclusion to our new way of walking: we are to join together in the worship of the Lord.
- This brings back to mind chapter two, where we are called to be a new temple of the Spirit in Christ, offering praise and worship to God.

Follow-up: (1) memorize 4:1-2 as a summary of the 'way of walking' we are called to in Christ. (2) Imagine the baptismal service in the early church, the old clothing is removed, the person is immersed in the water (a sign of both death and cleansing), and a new person emerges, now clothed in new garments. This is who we are in Christ. Consider how we are to live in a way worthy of our new clothing.